

Centennial Voices project underway at Prairie View

In the year 2078, students and historians at Prairie View A&M University will be able to hear about the school's first 100 years directly from those who shaped and lived it.

No, there's no magical elixir in the works.

What is in the works is a project to record on high-fidelity tape as many of Prairie View A&M's 70,000 living alumni, former employees, past teachers, present faculty and state officials as possible.

The Centennial Voices project, as the oral history endeavor has been designated, asks persons to buy a cassette tape, record in their own words pertinent personal information and their own recollections and views of Prairie View, then return the tape to the History Department.

Project director George Woolfolk, chairman of history, says the largest problem now is finding addresses for about 50,000 alumni for whom no current address is known.

Woolfolk and his three-member project team feel that

many former students are located in Central and East Texas in such areas as Temple-Waco, Tyler, Longview and Marshall as well as the Houston and Dallas urban regions.

Many of those would like to participate during the school's centennial year, he says, but that milestone is slipping away.

The university has already celebrated its centennial commencement and on-going projects have included a centennial observation of Afro-American History Month in February and, more recently, honoring the nearby birthplace of black planter and politician Norris Wright Cuney.

Dozens of other tentative centennial projects have been discussed, from fund raising, publicity and time capsules to "Operation Roots," which will try to identify and obtain photographs of key administrators and students in each academic and non-academic area since 1878.

Woolfolk says initial response to the Centennial Voices project has been good among university officials, Texas A&M System administrators and state officials.

Recordings have been received from regent chairman Clyde Wells, system chancellor Jack Williams, Texas A&M football coach Emory Bellard, Texas Commissioner of Education M. L. Brockette and Texas House Speaker Bill Clayton.

Invitations have been sent to Gov. Dolph Briscoe, numerous state senators and representatives, and current faculty, staff and students at Prairie View A&M.

Response has been so encouraging that Woolfolk says the university is considering another project called Vista Voices in which a videotape of key administrators and alumni will be solicited to join the tape recordings in the Prairie View A&M archives.

Woolfolk urges former students and past employees and teachers who wish to participate to contact the History Department as soon as possible.

While fund raising is not the purpose of the oral history program, any donations sent in with the tapes will be forwarded to the university's development and scholarship officials, he said.

Firemen's School adds course for public service dispatchers

Training for personnel who send emergency crews into action will be included in the Firemen's Training School this summer at Texas A&M University.

The new course is for public safety emergency service dispatchers who are in top demand nationwide.

"He's the nerve center of the whole operation," Chief Hershel Sharp said. "Without this individual, nothing else moves."

Taught by communications specialists of city and state agencies, the course is designed for fire, police, utilities and ambulance dispatchers. Enrollment will be limited to 30 trainees, Sharp said, "because we want to give each student individual attention."

He noted that Course 114 is different from other fire courses in that it is not restricted to fire personnel.

Half of the week-long training program will be devoted to hands-on experience in a communications center mock-up.

One of a number of highly-specialized courses, the new Firemen's Training School course could become an extension offering of the Fire Protection Training Division that would be conducted on the road. To reach that goal, the mock-up is being designed to be trans-

portable. The communications course, along with firefighting, fire prevention training and courses on fire service management, rescue operations, pump operations and other areas vital to fire service operations, will be part of the July 23-25 Municipal Firemen's Training School.

FTS will involve more than 2,500 participants. It is coordinated by the staff of the Fire Protection Training Division under Chief Henry D. Smith. He and staffers work with an advisory board to devise and install new courses.

"The advisory board has seen the need for this course for several years," Sharp said. The former Lubbock fire chief has worked with the Texas Department of Highway

Safety and Transportation as a course instructor to develop background for the FTS course.

To cover telecommunications equipment, operating procedures and telephone and radio techniques among other topics, the training will put students in actual dispatching situations in the mock-up of the radio control center. The mock-up is being developed by Dr. Lloyd Fite and the Electronics Training Division, also a part of the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

"It will be down-to-earth, hands-on type training," Sharp said. Emphasizing basic tools needed by their dispatcher, instruction will go into dictation, how to ask the right questions to get accurate information about emergencies and use of

organizational channels to get equipment and crews to sites in the shortest time.

"It takes a special breed of person, who knows how to organize calls and responses," Sharp added. "More and more, the job is being done by women."

Course instructors will include Joe Trowbridge, regional communications supervisor for the Department of Highway Safety and Transportation at Lubbock; Capt. Buddy Jenkins, Dallas-Fort Worth airport communications specialist; Ben Montague, Texas chapter officer of the Associated Public-Safety Communications Officers, and Bill Payne, city of Lubbock communications director.

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Next hurricane may devastate Texas, says A&M meteorologist

The next extreme hurricane to hit the Texas coast could well be the greatest financial disaster ever to befall the state, says a Texas A&M University meteorologist.

"We haven't had a major hurricane in several years," says Walter Henry, "and people have become complacent about the devastating effects of major storms."

"When we do have a big hurricane, I'm afraid it's going to be a nightmare," Henry says. "The buildup of beach front property, and the fact that many people just haven't seen a hurricane, is a real problem."

The hurricane season officially began June 1.

The new residents may not know what to do in an emergency, the meteorology professor said. They are not helped much by the old timers who tell how they weathered many storms. The old timers may not have been on the fringes of a major hurricane, or weathered a small hurricane, Henry says.

Fortitude does not do much good against a storm like Hurricane Celia in 1970. Hurricane winds of up to 90 mph can cause incredibly high tides and enormous waves.

Celia swept through Texas on a two-day spree, leaving in its wake 11 dead and more than \$453 million in damages to property and crops. Tornadoes also are spawned by the hurricanes, with 115 credited to Hurricane Beulah in 1967.

Precise figures on how many people are building or moving to the shoreline are sketchy, but evidence shows that many seaside resorts are becoming suburbs of cities, says the Texas A&M scientist. The National Weather Service estimates, for example, that in the past decade, 3 million more people have moved to the hurricane-prone areas of Florida. While the figures may not be as high, the pattern remains the same in Texas.

"Many of the newcomers haven't seen firsthand a major coastal storm, and do not realize how violent the sea can get," Henry said. "Waves and winds can hit a home like a Mack truck ramming the house. Now is the time to prepare for a hurricane, while there is plenty of time."

Henry suggests all coastal residents have two checklists. One for evacuation inland and a second list for remaining at home during a hurricane.

"Keep these lists available and, if it's convenient, keep them in a location such as the inside of closet door," Henry says. "That area can be the emergency center of the house."

A framework can be installed to hold a first aid kit, snakebite kit, flashlight, candles, waterproof matches and information on first aid, civil defense, tornado safety and hurricane preparedness.

Also, a fire extinguisher is recommended. Emergency phone numbers should be listed on the door in large figures that can be read in poor light without glasses, he adds.

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